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W A S H I N G T O N, D. C.

A N
INAUGURAL DISSERTATION
ON THE
G O U T:

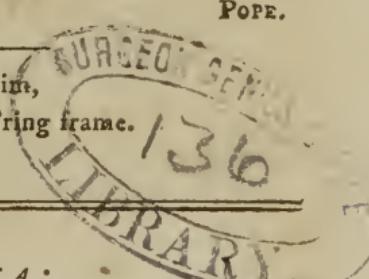
SUBMITTED TO THE EXAMINATION OF
THE REV. WILLIAM SMITH, S. T. P. PROVOST;
THE TRUSTEES, AND MEDICAL PROFESSORS
OF THE
COLLEGE OF PHILADELPHIA,
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MEDICINE,
ON THE 23d DAY OF JUNE, A. D. 1791.

BY GEORGE PFEIFFER OF PHILADELPHIA,
FELLOW OF THE PHILADELPHIA MEDICAL SOCIETY.

As man, perhaps, the moment of his breath,
Receives the lurking principle of death;
The young disease, that must subdue at length,
Grows with his growth, and strengthens with his strength.

POPE.

Be then my earnest care, and constant aim,
To ease his varied ills, and prop his tott'ring frame.



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M,DCC,XCI.

For
Dr Redman —

With sentiments of veneration
and respect, for his age
and worth,

From his

Obedient

Humble Servt.

The Author

To WILLIAM SHIPPEN, JUN. M. D. PROFESSOR OF ANATOMY, SURGERY, AND MIDWIFERY; BENJAMIN RUSH, M. D. PROFESSOR OF THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF MEDICINE; CASPAR WISTER, JUN. M. D. PROFESSOR OF CHEMISTRY AND PHYSIOLOGY; SAMUEL P. GRIFFITS, M. D. PROFESSOR OF THE MATERIA MEDICA AND PHARMACY; BENJAMIN SMITH BARTON, M. D. PROFESSOR OF NATURAL HISTORY AND BOTANY IN THE COLLEGE OF PHILADELPHIA.

Gentlemen,

IMPRESSED with all the esteem and respect, that a pupil can feel for his teachers: conscious of your unremitting zeal to inspire your pupils with a taste for study and observation; and sensible of your ardent and generous exertions for their advancement in the temple of science;

Permit me, thus publicly, to acknowledge the sentiments of a thankful heart—And be assured, respected Sirs, that of your politeness, and of the instruction which I have derived from your useful lectures, I shall always retain a grateful remembrance.

GEORGE PFEIFFER.

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T O
J A M E S R E A D, E S Q U I R E,
O F
R E A D I N G, P E N N S Y L V A N I A.

Honoured Sir,

To you I likewise owe a large share of gratitude, for the kind favours which you have bestowed upon me.—And, after having spent a long and exemplary life, engaged in the service of your country,—that you may receive a just and full reward, where only it is to be experienced, is the sincere prayer of,

S I R,

Your much obliged, and

Very humble Servant,

GEORGE PFEIFFER.

INTRODUCTION.

IN conformity to a law of this institution, and with great diffidence, I take up my pen;—and, when the reader reflects that I write, not from choice, but necessity, would fain flatter myself, that he will receive the following sheets with a candid indulgence.

But before I begin the consideration of the subject proposed, would take some notice of a common and absurd error, which I believe has been very injurious to the interests of medical science.

Almost infinite in number are the names of diseases; and as infinitely different in their nature do many people suppose diseases to be. Thus, mention half a dozen to an ignorant man, which would require nearly the same remedy, he has an opposite and infallible one for each. On the other hand, only tell a Brunonian, that you labour under a sthenic or asthenic disease, and he, confident that it must be uniformly one or the other, will either starve or stimulate you indiscriminately, till he kills or cures you.

Diseases are, however, by no means so uniform in their progress as the Brunonians would make them, nor so diversified in their nature as too many suppose them.

Thus,

Thus, it is now ascertained, that the difference between tetanus and hydrophobia is very trifling ; hysteria and hypochondriasis are nearly the same, requiring only dyspepsia to unite them ; rheumatism and gout require also nothing but dyspepsia to make them very similar to each other : gout seems further to be the connecting medium betwixt inflammatory and nervous diseases, sometimes chiefly affecting the sanguiferous, sometimes the nervous system.

A N

INAUGURAL DISSERTATION, &c.

OF THE GOUT.

AT the very opening of our subject, a perplexing and almost insurmountable difficulty occurs: it would appear absurd to treat of the causes and cure of any disease, without first defining, or rather describing that disease. To do this satisfactorily, in the present instance, would be a most laborious task indeed; and would, of itself, far exceed the utmost limits of this dissertation: for the gout is not only different in the same person at different times, but frequently counterfeits almost every disease incident to the human body. I shall, therefore, be very concise in my definition and history; and for further information on these heads must refer to Sydenham, Warner, Van Swieten, and Cullen.

In pursuing this subject, I shall divide the gout into two species, viz. inflammatory and nervous; or tonic and atonic: under one or the other of which, all the varieties mentioned by authors may be included. This division, I conceive, to be of the utmost importance; and as it is founded on experience,

rience, I hope to make the propriety of it appear very evident in the course of this enquiry:—I shall consider each species separately, after first saying a few words on the disease in general.

The gout seldom appears before the thirty-fifth year of a person's life; it most generally affects the male sex, though sometimes the female. It is most frequently met with in robust persons, with large bodies and *heads*, who have also full and corpulent habits. It generally seizes on the indolent and sedentary, on persons who eat a great deal of animal, and but little vegetable food. It is also a frequent attendant on men of genius, deep understanding, and close application. Young persons, and such as are not far advanced beyond the *acme* of life, are most subject to the tonic species, while the aged and weak are liable to the atonic. Women are also for the most part subject to the atonic. Sometimes, however, the sthenic gout is seen in old, infirm people, while the asthenic occurs in the young and vigorous. The gout is likewise frequently hereditary. To support this assertion, I have not only the authority of many physicians of the first eminence, as Sydenham, Boerhaave, Van Swieten, Warner, Cullen, Kirkland, &c. but facts (I had almost said) innumerable, tend to confirm the truth of it. Drs. Cadogan, Brown, and others, however, have thought proper, totally to deny and ridicule this idea: Dr Brown, in his Elements of Medicine, tells us, “ That a taint transmitted from parents to their offspring, and celebrated under the appellation

appellation of hereditary is a tale, or there is nothing in the fundamental part of his doctrine. The sons of the rich, who succeed to their father's estate, succeed also to their gout. Those who are excluded from the former, are also excluded from the latter, unless they bring it on by their own *merit*. In short, they both loudly affirm, that the gout is always, without exception, the creature of intemperance.

Now, if bare assertions, unsupported by facts, are mere cyphers in science, to what, I would ask, can all these gentlemen have advanced on this head lead?—For my own part, I cannot but think, to corroborate our opinion. For when a man, to overthrow established facts, makes use of empty assertions and railing, it is with me an almost indubitable proof of their reality. In favour of our doctrine, the great Sydenham tells us, that young persons are seldom or never afflicted with this disease, except from hereditary diathesis; and that he himself never saw any, unless they had been begotten by gouty parents.

Van Swieten says, that he has seen many people, who had no reason to blame any cause whatever but an hereditary taint; who although they lived according to the greatest chastity and sobriety, yet had been attacked by this disease even early in life—Among other instances, he makes mention of a skilful physician, who, knowing that the gout was hereditary in his family, always, from his early years, apprehended an attack from

this latent enemy :—nor was he deceived, for he fell at length under its power.

Dr Cullen, in his First Lines, also says, that the gout is generally an hereditary disease ; and further, that the facts supporting this doctrine are very numerous.

The learned Dr Warner, in his elaborate treatise on this disease, tells us, “ It appears from facts daily verified, that there are people much afflicted with the gout, in the early part of their life, who have not known intemperance, high living, or inactivity ; but have unfortunately derived it from their parents, in the particular frame of their constitutions.”

“ Notwithstanding, (says Kirkland, in his Enquiry,) what may have been said to the contrary, I join in the general opinion, that the gout is often hereditary ; because I have known children born of gouty parents afflicted with it—because I have seen it inherited by the natural son of a gentleman in the station of a labourer ; and because those persons, whose ancestors have been troubled with this affection, are more subject to it than others.”

The following fact I received from a respectable student of medicine, who told me that he had read it in some of Dr Cullen’s manuscript lectures.—I think it was nearly in the these words : “ There is a certain charitable house in the city of Edinburgh, in which, together with many children of poor origin, the natural offspring of gouty lords and gentlemen are maintained. It is observed,

that

that most of the latter become afflicted with this dreadful disease, while the former never experience the slightest symptom of it." Now, these children are neither fed luxuriously, nor sparingly, but, no doubt, live on good wholesome diet; and certainly are not suffered to be idle or inactive.

Amongst other cases, Dr Rush, in his lectures, mentions that of a whole family who suffered by this disease.

The grand-father, if I mistake not, laboured under it—Most of his children, if not all, had it after him—His son married, and communicated it to his children—The greatest number of these were females, who lived neither an inactive nor intemperate life; but, on the contrary, used all rational means to avoid the disease. In spite, however, of their utmost endeavours, they all died martyrs to the gout. It is likewise not an idle and groundless hypothesis, imposed on us by false and self-interested theorists, but has been noted by accurate and faithful observers of nature, that children begotten before their parent has had the gout, have never known a symptom of it: while, on the other hand, children of the same parent, begotten after the disease has made its appearance in him, and especially soon after he has been labouring under a paroxysm of it; these children, I say, have been severely afflicted with it.

Definition and History of the Tonic Species.

THIS species generally consists in a violent pain and inflammation of the joints, particularly the smaller ones, as those of the great toe, &c. frequently attended with fever; and, for the most part, preceded by an unusual affection of the stomach.

It does not, however, always exhibit these phenomena; for instead of the joints, it sometimes seizes on the lungs, brain, &c. Sometimes also, while it affects one part with excess of action, as the joints or lungs, it affects others with deficiency of action, as the stomach and intestines; nay, I believe, it seldom or never appears in the alimentary canal, except in the atonic state. A paroxysm of the regular tonic gout, is generally preceded by a ceasing of the sweat natural to the feet; an unusual coldness in the feet and legs; a seeming descent of flatulencies through the fleshy parts of the thigh; a frequent numbness, alternating with a sensation of prickling over the whole of the lower extremities; convulsive motions of the muscles of the legs, and an unusual turgescence of the veins. Some degree of torpor and languor is at the same time felt over the whole body, together with a diminution of the appetite, flatulency in the stomach and bowels, &c. These symptoms generally continue only for a few days, after which the paroxysm commences, most commonly at two or three o'clock in the morning, when the patient is waked by

a violent pain resembling that of a dislocated bone, and usually affecting the ball of the great toe; though sometimes the calf of the leg, heel, or some other part of the foot.

These symptoms are immediately succeeded by a chilliness, shivering, and fever, which, together with a topical inflammation of the part, generally continues as long as the pain itself.

From its first onset, the pain gradually increases, and comes to its height in about twelve hours; after which it as gradually remits, and in about twelve hours more almost entirely ceases, leaving the patient in a breathing sweat, who now soon falls into a sweet and refreshing sleep. Upon waking, he observes, instead of a swelling of the veins of the part, which alone appeared before, the part itself to be considerably tumified and red.

For several days after this, which I would call the great fit, there is a slight return every evening of the abovementioned symptoms, which continue with more or less violence till morning: after some time, however, they entirely abate, and leave the patient generally in a remarkably good state of health: when the fit is going off, a violent itching seizes the foot, especially between the toes.

The progress of the disease is marked by the intervals, which were at first from three to four years, gradually shortening, till at length the patient is almost incessantly tormented with it, except for a few months in the summer.

* It is also marked by the parts which it affects; for, at first, we commonly see one foot only affected, then both feet alternately; then the hands, wrists, elbows, knees, lungs, brain, &c. *

It might have been mentioned before, that after the first paroxysms, the joints recover their former strength, suppleness, &c. but after the disease has frequently recurred, they remain weak, and stiff; and at length loose all capability of motion. Concretions of a chalky nature, are likewise often observed to take place on the outside of the joints, immediately under the skin. It may also not be improper to mention that in this advanced state of the disease, the paroxysms frequently alternate with nephritic affections. But, what seems most extraordinary is, that the bones themselves, sometimes become distorted and soft, like those of ricketty children. Many cases of this kind are recorded by authors; some of which may be found in († 1. Van Swieten; 2. Morand; 3. Gagliardi; 4. Petit; 5. Du Verney, &c. &c.)

Du Verney relates an extraordinary case of a man, who about the twenty-fourth year of his age, was attacked with what were judged to be gouty pains, about his heels, knees, and the upper joints of his thighs. In a year after, his whole body was

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* All the phenomena taken notice of in this definition, have been observed by Sydenham or Cullen.

† 1. Comment. vol. 13. 2. Histoire de la maladie singuliere, & de l'examen du cadavre d'une femme. 3. Anatom. os. p. 70, & seq. 4. Traité des maladies des os. tom ii. 5. Traité des maladies des os. tom ii.

tormented with such violent pains, that he was obliged to lie almost continually in bed.

About this time the bones began to soften; and at length became so flexible as to bend like wax. His body likewise shrunk to a very small size.

It is remarkable, that in many cases of this nature, mentioned by authors, the urine deposited a very plentiful sediment, which, upon examination, was found to be of the same nature with the chalky concretions of the joints, and the calculi of the bladder.

Dr Wister, in his lectures on chemistry, relates the case of a child, whose bones were softened by the rickets, and whose urine contained an astonishing quantity of phosphoric acid. Now, when chemically analyzed, the bones of animals, at least when in an healthy condition, yield a large quantity of calcareous earth and phosphoric acid.

From the abovementioned case, therefore, the Doctor was inclined to conclude, (and I think very justly,) that their firmness and solidity depend in a great measure on the presence of this acid in them. And, in my opinion, we may as justly add, that the calcareous earth also contributes very much to give them a consistent degree of hardness.

The matter of which the concretions we have just mentioned are formed, is called by many authors the morbid matter, or cause of the disease. This doctrine appears to me a very strange and erroneous one; for, in general, we see nothing of this materia morbi, till after the gout has been

raging

raging many years. We therefore look upon it entirely as an effect, and not as the cause; and think it quite rational to suppose, that, in process of time, the disease induces such a disposition in the vessels of the parts particularly affected, as to cause them to pour forth into the cavities of the joints, &c. that matter, which, in health, was poured into the substance of the bones by their secretory vessels, and gave them strength and firmness.

I have now given as full an account of the first species, as the nature of this work would admit of; but must acknowledge, that several phenomena have been mentioned under this head not peculiar to either; as they must, however, have come in somewhere, I thought, they might as well be mentioned here as anywhere else.

A very few words will suffice for the

Definition and History of the Atonic Species.

Here there is, for the most part, little or no inflammation and pain in the joints; fever generally light, or entirely wanting; and dyspepsia, often attended with other marks of debility.

The principal symptoms are, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, flatulency, acid eructations, and severe pains in the epigastric region. Frequently also, there occur pains and cramps in several parts of the trunk and upper extremities; colic pains and costiveness also, for the most part, attend, though

though sometimes a diarrhoea. In these circumstances the mind often sympathises with the body; so that, to use the words of the immortal Sydenham, “ It is not easy to determine which of the two is most afflicted; for all the symptoms of hypochondriasis not unfrequently attend. Palpitations, faintings, dyspepsia, convulsions, &c. do likewise sometimes take place.

When we are called to a person labouring under all, or most of the abovementioned symptoms, we may be almost certain, that they are marks of the gout; by there occurring, at the same time, slight pains, and, at least, a tendency to inflammation in the smaller joints, especially of the lower extremities: by their returning after certain periods of time; by appearing in such habits as we might, *a priori*, suppose to be predisposed to the gout; and by this disease having been hereditary in the patient’s family.

It may not here be improper to observe, that these two species often run into each other; the tonic becoming atonic, and *vice versa*; and that a mixture of both sometimes occurs.

Of the Causes of the Gout.

THESE I shall divide into the predisposing, remote, occasional or exciting, and proximate.

This is a difficult part of our subject. The three first I shall consider as appertaining to the disease

in general; and the fourth, as particularly distinguishing the two species of it.

1st. By the predisposing cause, or predisposition, I mean that state of the system which is absolutely necessary to the production of the disease; and which, being wanting, the exciting causes would always be applied in vain. By this expression, however, I do not wish to intimate with Dr Brown, Cadogan, &c. that the action of the usually exciting causes, is always necessary to its production. On the contrary, I firmly believe, that in the case of hereditary diathesis, it often occurs without the least evidence of any exciting causes having been applied. The predisposing cause then, I, with Dr Rush, suppose to be debility; this debility is either acquired or hereditary. The acquired is also, for the most part, of the indirect kind; the powers producing it being in general of a stimulating nature.

That general debility is the predisposing cause of the gout, may be inferred, 1st, From the time of life at which it commonly appears: 2d. From the habits in which it generally occurs: 3d. From the incontestable marks of debility, which almost invariably precede every paroxysm of it, as tremors, coldness, especially of the extremities, dyspepsia, and weak pulse. I infer it, 4th, From the remedies which, if given when a paroxysm is about to commence, will frequently put it back. These are the warm bath, laudanum, wine, &c. a pint, or even a quart of wine, may be often administered,

not

not only with perfect safety, but manifest advantage, while a paroxysm of even the tonic species is in the forming state: but when the inflammation, and other symptoms of excessive irregular action, (for so we shall denominate it) have come on, nothing would be more improper or injurious, as we trust our plan of cure, which has been repeatedly practised with the best success, will fully prove. These considerations on predisposition will very aptly apply to inflammatory diseases in general; and few as they are, I deem them abundantly sufficient, entirely to overthrow Dr Brown's hypothesis, who supposes predisposition to be nothing but an inferior degree of the disease itself. Thus, in the forming stage of inflammatory diseases, he tells us, that the action of the system is considerably above health; while it is notorious, that all their precur- sory symptoms, without exception, tend to disprove this unwarranted assertion.

Nay, so universally are symptoms of debility ob- served in the forming state of all diseases, except such as arise immediately from wounds or poisons, that our learned professor of the theory and practice of medicine, (Dr Rush) calls disease and debility synonymous terms.

Here we cannot but acknowledge a seeming in- accuracy of expression in making use merely of the word debility, to express our idea of the pre- disposing cause: for, says an opponent, if it consists in mere debility, why do we not see it after ner- vous fevers, syncope, &c.? For surely, here we
have

have enough of it in all conscience!—Granted, we have; but let it be remembered, that debility may be very properly divided into two kinds, viz. acute and chronic; and further, into such as affects the living or moving solids only, and such as also affects the simple solids or stamina. Under the former I would class such diseases of defective action, as are, comparatively speaking, of but short duration, and appear soon after the causes of them have been first applied. To the latter belong the gout, and all other chronic diseases; that is, such as do not appear immediately, but require a long continued application of their causes to produce them. To prove that even the firmest of all the simple solids, viz. the bones may, and often do become much debilitated, we have only to refer to the works of Van Swieten, Petit, Du Verney, &c.

Of the Remote Causes.

BY these, I mean all those powers, which, when long continued, produce the state of predisposition.

They are intemperance, indolence, intense study, in short, irregularities of every kind.

Intemperance in eating and drinking, are of themselves sufficient to induce the gout; but must (I had almost said) inevitably do it when connected with a sedentary or indolent mode of life: for then, notwithstanding Dr Brown's opinion, a plethora will be produced, which every body knows, must induce debility. By plethora, I mean a pre-

ternatural fulness and over distension of the vessels by the fluids of the body. What must we again think of that man, who, with unparalleled boldness, steps forward to overthrow, by mere assertions, a doctrine founded on and confirmed by every day's experience?

Nothing in my opinion is more easy to be conceived, than the gradual formation of a plethora by indolence, and luxurious living; for by indolence the action of the system in general, and especially the secretions, and excretions, are greatly diminished; while by the luxurious living, constantly and particularly stimulating the stomach, an inordinate appetite is generally created, often attended with a quick and powerful digestion. Here then, contrary to the Doctor's opinion, we have a large quantity of nutritious fluid generated and conveyed into the system. But all the fluids are too long, and in too great abundance retained there: now this retention constitutes neither more nor less than plethora.

The immoderate use of wine, and other spirituous liquors, is not only productive of the disease in question, but also of dropsies, obstructions of the liver, and of other viscera, madness, palsy, apoplexy, epilepsy; in short, almost every disease, both acute and chronic, to which the human body is liable*.

But,

* For ample information on this subject, I beg leave to refer to an essay by Dr Rush, intitled, "An Inquiry into the Effects of Spirituous Liquors upon the Human Body, and their Influence upon the Happiness of Society."

But, further ; so great is the power of these liquors in producing the gout, that in those countries where the use of them is unknown, this disease is also unheard of ; witness India, and Lapland. See Van Swieten's Commentaries, vol. 13. and Linnæus, Flor. Lapon. p. 155†.

Intense study may act in two ways ; first, by the inactivity generally connected with it ; and secondly, by a power of its own. We believe that both reason and experience are on our side, when we say, that thinking is a stimulus ; and that when moderately employed, it invigorates both the mind and body ; but that when carried to excess, like other stimuli, it induces indirect debility.

Of the Occasional or Exciting Causes.

WHEN there is in the system that peculiar kind of debility, or state predisposing to the gout, which
is

† Dr Cadogan, in his treatise on the gout, has the following note : “ I have made what inquiries I could upon this capital article (viz. wine), from living witnesses ; for I don't always pin my faith upon books, knowing it to be no uncommon thing for authors, instead of framing their system from observation and experience, to wrest and explain both to support their opinions. I have been assured by a physician, who practised above thirty years in Turkey, that from the Danube to the Euphrates, he had never seen a gouty Turk. I have also been informed by some of our ministers, who had resided many years in Constantinople, that the gout, and other diseases of the same class were not uncommon at court ; but the courtiers, it seems, were not as good Mahometans as those who lived in the country ; for they drank wine, drams, liquors of all sorts, without restraint.

“ I have also been credibly informed, that the Gentoos, or Mahrattas, a people of India, living in the most temperate simplicity, chiefly upon rice, have no such thing as the gout, or indeed any other chronic disease among them.”

is either hereditary, or induced by the remote causes, as before mentioned, then a fit of intemperance, excess in venery, night watching, excessive evacuations, &c. will often almost immediately bring on a paroxysm of it* by suddenly inducing great debility, and a morbid increase of excitability.

But, says a Brunonian, most of your exciting causes are direct stimuli:—To be sure, an excess of them will induce debility; but then it will be of the indirect kind, in which there is never an increase, but always a diminution of excitability. What proof is there for this assertion? Dr Brown tells us so.—It is true, he does; but his *ipse dixit* by no means makes it so.

Let us, however, for ourselves examine the Doctor's accuracy on this subject. By excitability, we mean that property in the animal œconomy, on which all powers act. In proportion as the action of these is more or less sensibly felt, we say, that the excitability is more or less accumulated: their effect, is termed excitement. The Doctor has divided the excitement and excitability into a scale of 80 degrees. Now this, like many other parts of his doctrine, appears to me very incongruous; for, according to him, there cannot possibly be a transition from (we will say) direct debility to inflammatory diathesis, except by a direct and uniform ascension through the point of health; nor to indirect debility, unless by a passage through both these states.

* The reader will please to remember, that all this may be done by hereditary disposition alone, independent of any evident external exciting causes.—See page 9 &c.

states. Thus a person killed by lightening, or a fool who drops down dead, while he is emptying his bottle, or a patient, whom, being at number — of debility, instead of invigorating, you render weaker than he was before, by too powerful a stimulus: all these must first, by regular gradation, have passed through the several intermediate states just mentioned; an idea equally repugnant to common sense and reason. His scale also teaches us, that where excitement begins excitability ends, and *vice versa*. Of course then they increase in a ratio exactly opposite to each other.

He tells us, that in diseases of direct debility, the excitability is always greatly accumulated; and that we must begin their cure with small doses of stimuli, and gradually increase them: typhus and tetanus are classed under this head. Now, who does not know that in tetanus, instead of commencing with gentle, we must begin and go on with the combined force of many, and those the most powerful stimuli, to effect a cure? And that in typhus, the excitability, instead of being morbidly accumulated, is very often insensible to the action of the greatest stimuli? So insensible is it frequently, that flies have been seen to crawl over that tender organ the eye, without creating any uneasiness. On the other hand, in phthisis pulmonalis, which he classes under the head of indirect debility, instead of being diminished, is not the excitability often surprisingly increased? So much so, that we must begin with the most gentle stimuli, and gradually increase them;

them; and that the slightest exercise, as rocking in a cradle or coach, is nevertheless highly stimulating. And moreover, who else would say, that the excitability is morbidly increased in hypochondriasis? Are not the stomach and intestines, in this disease, almost insensible to the action of emetics, and even of drastic purgatives? And is not the system in general in so torpid a state as to be but little affected by the most powerful stimulants of every kind? But what we think will entirely overthrow this hypothesis, is the consideration of inflammatory diseases. Here we have the Doctor's increased excitement. If, however, excitability is measured by the degree of sensibility to the action of stimuli, who, besides him, will, after a moment's reflection, venture to say that it is here diminished? Is not the system, or diseased part of it, affected by stimuli, whose action would not have been felt before?*

That the exciting causes bring on a paroxysm of the gout, and all inflammatory diseases, not as the Brunonians would suppose, by gradually raising the excitement above the healthy point, but by inducing debility, we infer first, from many of these causes being directly debilitating powers, as excessive evacuations, night-watching, sudden transition from rich to low diet, the cooling vegetables, as watermelons, cucumbers, &c. 2d. From the indubitable marks of debility to be observed in their forming stage, and after the exciting causes have been applied.

* These strictures apply especially to the scale prefixed to Dr Brown's Elements of Medicine.

3d. and lastly, From the good effects resulting from the administration of wine, laudanum, and other stimulants, at this time.

From these observations it might be supposed by some, that the aid of the *vis medicatrix naturæ*, must be called in to extricate us from this seeming difficulty :—But no—we acknowledge not the power of this supposed goddess; and have only to observe, that in this state of debility, and increased excitability, the ordinary agents, as heat, light, the blood, secreted juices, &c. which were before harmonious to the powers of the system, being now very disproportionate thereto, are the imaginary deity that will soon bring on the paroxysm, unless a certain degree of tone and vigour be suddenly given to the system.

Of the Proximate Cause of the Tonic Species.

I HAVE already said, and I trust shall clearly prove, when treating on the cure, that this species is an inflammatory affection; and as all complaints of this nature, wheresoever situated, must depend upon the same cause, I shall here deliver what I suppose to be the proximate cause of inflammatory diseases in general. I have, however, anticipated myself on this subject, having already said, that it consists in an excess of irregular action in the arterial system. This term (first taught us by Dr Rush) I make use of in preference to Dr Brown's appellation of increased excitement; because, instead of the

the general vigour being greater than usual, we, for the most part, observe the energy of every part of the system, except the arterial, to be very considerably diminished; so much so, that almost their whole force and power of action seem to be absorbed in that of the heart and arteries.

This is particularly the case with the functions of the stomach, intestines, and muscles of voluntary motion. I adopt the opinion of excessive action as the proximate cause: 1st. From observing the following symptoms; as increased heat, redness, tension, and a violent throbbing of the arteries. 2d. Because by it I conceive all the phænomena of inflammation can be best explained. 3d. Because the direct tendency of the remedies by which the most effectual relief is obtained, is to diminish action.

Perhaps I may be blamed by some, for not assigning some occult cause; as a lensor, or acidity of the blood, spasm, &c. for the symptoms of inflammation.

Such characters I shall leave to the proper enjoyment of their own opinions; and only observe, first, that all doctrines of this kind, though they may have flourished for a time, have at length been invariably refuted, and consigned to oblivion.

That of Boerhaave has been shewn by Cullen to be incompatible with the exercise of the most important functions of the animal œconomy. Nay, we are taught by the celebrated Mr Hewson's experiments, that a state of the fluids, exactly opposite

site to what Boerhaave supposed, takes place in inflammation.

Boerhaave imagined the proximate cause of inflammatory diseases to be a lentor, or viscidity of the blood. Mr Hewson, in his Enquiries, has shewn that the blood, in inflammatory diathesis, is thinner than in health. Dr Cullen's doctrine of spasm has likewise, I conceive, been ably refuted by Brown, and other eminent men. I might also bring forward many arguments in opposition to this doctrine; but, as they may all be found in Brown's Observations, and Dickinson on Fevers, I will not take up any time in detailing them. I cannot, however, refrain from mentioning one fact which, I think is, of itself, sufficient to overthrow Dr Cullen's doctrine. The Doctor builds his hypothesis chiefly on the two following phænomena: 1st. A preternatural contraction throughout the whole arterial system. 2d. A stoppage of the pores. Now, inflammatory fevers have sometimes been observed to be attended with profuse sweats throughout their whole course. I observe, secondly, That, in my opinion, the doctrines of occult causes, have been seldom or never productive of benefit, but very often of great mischief to society. With what dreadful consequences must not a practice founded on the supposition of an acid in the blood, as the cause, have been attended? Of this I will briefly relate one instance. A celebrated physician (I believe at Leipsic), being of this opinion, was seized with a pneumonia;

and

and instead of making use of venæfction, he took large quantities of alkali to neutralise the superabundant acid. The consequence was—he died a martyr to his own ill-founded opinion. And I am bold to say, that any physician, who, instead of studying, and being guided by the book of nature, is governed in his practice by the idle speculations of himself, or of other ingenious men, will, most probably, do much harm both to himself and those intrusted to his care.

Far—far be it from me, however, to say that theory is useless. Let us only be careful to make it subservient to experience, and sound practice; and not make our practice subservient to it.

Though the theories of Boerhaave and Cullen were very different, yet their practice was nearly the same. But see the great, the sagacious Sydenham. Look at his theories. How absurd were many of them! His profound and true knowledge, however, secured him from being led astray by them in his practice.

He contemplated the phænomena of inflammatory diseases, and was sure that bleeding, purging, &c. were the most effectual remedies. He too, in these cases, supposed the human system to be filled with morbific matter. But when he drew blood, and by that means cured his patients, he contented himself with saying, that the morbific matter must certainly have flowed out at the orifice, and the good humours have remained behind!

Of the Proximate Cause of the Atonic Species.

AS this species is directly opposite to the tonic, so all the symptoms of it evidently declare its proximate cause to be deficiency of action. But it may be asked, if the inflammatory state, or re-action depends upon debility, why does it not take place here? To this question I answer, that though they both have their origin in debility; yet to produce this action, it is necessary that the fibres should possess a certain degree of tone or vigour. Now, to me it appears, that, in habits subject to the atonic gout, the constitution of the fibres is so feeble, either originally, as in women, from repeated attacks of the disorder, or from old age, as to render them not easily capable of such re-action—I say not easily, because it does nevertheless sometimes occur.

For example, we know that cold is a debilitating power. Now, if two persons, the one of a strong athletic, the other of a weak nervous constitution, should chance to sleep in the open cold air, I can very readily conceive, though it would undoubtedly debilitate them both, that the former would be in danger of contracting a pleurisy, the latter a typhus. Also, that if a strong man and feeble woman, both unaccustomed to intoxication, should be made, as it is vulgarly called, dead drunk, by spirituous liquors, the debauch might be succeeded in one by an inflammatory, in the other by a ner-

vous fever. Again, though the cold bath must act in the same manner on all human systems ; yet it is a fact well known, that in some it produces a glow on the surface and increased action, whilst in others, it induces a diminution, and sometimes a total suppression of action. Why ? Because, in the latter, the constitution of the fibres is too weak to admit of a re-action.

I now come to the most important part of my subject, viz.

THE CURE.

I SHALL treat of the cure of each species in distinct chapters. And first,

Of the Tonic.

THE indications here are, in the first place, to alleviate and shorten the fit. 2d. To prevent a return of it. Our first indication is answered by all those means which tend to diminish excessive irregular action in the arterial system—These are bleeding, vomiting, purging, refrigerants, cold, &c.

Here we have again to combat the notions and authority of Dr Brown ; for, in every instance, he pursued a plan of cure, diametrically opposite to this, which we are about to inculcate. We presume, that the Doctor fell into this error in consequence of his being ignorant, that most, if not

all diseases have two stages; and that of many diseases there are two distinct species—witness the gout and rheumatism*.

Indeed, his classification of diseases indiscriminately into sthenic and asthenic, or diseases of vigor and debility, appears to me one of the most lamentable of all his errors; for when he should starve, he must inevitably often stimulate, and *vice versa*.

But because he has seen some cases of the contagious catarrh, apoplexy, gout, &c. attended with symptoms of defective action, and cured by stimulants, they must be always what he calls diseases of debility! Now, it is well known, that the apoplexy is as often cured by bleeding as by any other means. But even the influenza of the autumn of 1789, as it appeared in this city, and other parts of our state, was to me an incontestible proof of the falsity of this doctrine. For though it was in every instance called an asthenic disease by the Brunonians; and though they indiscriminately poured in stimulants without measure, nevertheless, those physicians who paid more regard to nature than to the opinions of Dr Brown, and who, trusting a little to their own senses, saw the symptoms as they really appeared, were abundantly convinced of its absurdity:—For although, in some cases, there were symptoms of defective action, which stimuli relieved; yet, in many they observed a full tense pulse, with other marks of excessive irregular ac-

tion,

* This discovery has been likewise given to us by our eminent professor, Dr Rush, and has been fully ascertained by him in the course of his practice.

tion, where bleeding, and the antiphlogistic plan in general was practised with success.

Our first remedy, then, is

Bleeding.

AND for its recommendation we have the sanction of Lister, Hoffman, Pringle, Small, Cullen, and M'Bride; all of whom recommend it, especially in the first paroxysms, and in the young and vigorous.

Dr Rush has likewise witnessed its good effects; for he, but a few months ago, cured a patient labouring under a severe fit by bleeding, and the antiphlogistic plan in general.

Blood has sometimes been drawn to the extent of twenty ounces at a time in this disease. This was, however, certainly a very large evacuation, when we consider that it was taken from gouty patients: for though it might, and I dare say, did put a stop to the fit for the present, yet, we now know, that large bleedings dispose to more frequent returns of the disease. And, except in young, vigorous constitutions, we find the most permanent relief from topical bleeding.

Small, by the advice of Sir John Pringle, applied leeches to himself with great advantage: when leeches cannot be had, scarifications with a lancet, or cupping, may be substituted in their place.

The next remedy is

Vomiting.

IN FAVOUR of this evacuation, we have the testimony of M'Brude, Small, &c. The name of Small must be undoubtedly of the highest authority in the gout, when we reflect that he himself was most cruelly afflicted with it. After having by various means, and for a long time, vainly endeavoured to obtain relief, he, at length, to his great satisfaction and comfort, made trial of vomiting, and found it attended with the best effects. He was first induced to make trial of an emetic by a frequent sickness at his stomach: it brought away a great deal of bile, and relieved him so much, that afterwards, whenever the gout seized him, he took one, by which there was generally a great deal of bile discharged, both by the mouth and anus, and the violence of the disease was almost instantaneously alleviated. I think it, however, proper to mention, that Mr Small was of a strong athletic constitution; and as even in this species, the stomach is often affected with atonia, I would be very cautious in the administration of emetics, and generally trust to nauseating doses of ipecacuanha, tartar emetic, &c. For one great effect of vomiting is a determination to the superficies, which these nauseating doses abundantly promote. Even Mr Small himself, in slight attacks, found great benefit from the use of them.

The third remedy is

Purging.

It is true that Sydenham forbids it, but he condemns evacuation in general: his authority is, however, merely negative; for though he, without a doubt, observed them in some cases to be injurious, yet we have many positive proofs of their good effects; and we know that even one positive proof is sufficient to overthrow an hundred negative ones. Gentle laxatives, or clysters, are recommended by M'Bride, Small, and many other authors of eminence: and as a means to subdue inflammatory action, we see not the least impropriety in a cautious use of them; nay, if the patient be costive, they cannot be dispensed with:—Dr Rush, and other eminent practitioners of this city, have administered them with good success.

Sulphur has lately become a fashionable remedy in this complaint. It is either taken in substance, a tea spoonful for a dose, once or twice a-day, or else in what is called diffusion in water, after the following manner:—To one pound of sulphur, finely powdered, and put into a stone or earthen jar, add one gallon of water; let it stand for four or five days, stirring it well two or three times a-day: at the end of the fourth day draw it off fine for use. Drink half a pint every morning, at least half an hour before breakfast. Let the jar be stopped close when you are not stirring the mixture.

This medicine constantly keeps the habit lax, and very powerfully promotes perspiration and urine; consequently considerable benefit may be expected from the use of it in this species of the gout, especially as it is so safe and simple a medicine.

The fourth class of remedies are

Refrigerants.

THESE, particularly nitre, are universally allowed to allay inordinate heat, and diminish the action of the system. To enter into the investigation and disputes of the manner in which they produce these effects, the nature of my work will not admit; and indeed, it is sufficient for my purpose to know that they do produce them.

Further, as the good effects of nitre, in inflammatory diseases, are so well established by the most eminent of the profession, I can recommend it as an excellent remedy in this species of the gout.

The fifth remedy is

The application of Cold.

THERE has been as much dispute and contrariety of opinion on the subject of cold, as perhaps on any other in medicine. Some physicians make it a direct stimulant and tonic—others think they can account for its effects better, by supposing it now a tonic, and now a sedative: while others, again, make

make all its operations the consequence of a deficient stimulus or sedative.

The consideration of these opinions would, of itself, fill a volume. Suffice it, therefore, to say, that its good effects in the small-pox, measles, synocha, phrenitis, tonic rheumatism, tonic gout, in short, in inflammatory diseases in general, are too well ascertained to admit of any dispute.

Dr Rush, in his lectures, tells us of a gentleman in this city, who cured himself of a fit, by dipping the affected limb into cold water. But what more clearly proves the efficacy of cold in this disease than any thing else with which I am acquainted, is the case of the abovementioned Mr Small. This practice appears to be well known and followed in the West-Indies, especially in Jamaica. For Mr Small having occasion to visit that island, was desired by Dr Nasmyth, an eminent physician there, to lay aside the application of flannel and oil-skin, to which he had been accustomed, and keep only a cotton stocking to his foot; telling him at the same time, that experience had taught them, to keep gouty limbs cool in that country*.

For several paroxysms after Dr Nasmyth's advice, Mr Small kept the affected limb cool, by which means the fits were always rendered short and slight. Having, however, at the instance of some learned, but prejudiced friends, neglected to make use of the abovementioned remedies, in a succeeding

* Mr Small's Observations on the Gout, may be seen in the 6th volume of the London Medical Observations and Enquiries.

ing fit he suffered a constant and most tormenting confinement for several months; so that in a subsequent attack, disregarding their censure, (which he had like to have done too late) he again had recourse to emetics, leeches, and cool air, thereby stopping its course.

So powerful indeed were the anodyne effects of cold in his case, that when he lay in bed at night during a paroxysm, he could almost entirely divest himself of pain, by uncovering the affected limb. Small likewise makes mention of two other gentlemen afflicted with this disease, who experienced the same salutary effects from cold air. Along with the above means, the patient must, for the most part, strictly observe the antiphlogistic regimen, which consists in carefully abstaining from all food (especially animal) and drinks of a stimulating nature. The diet should consist chiefly of mild vegetables, and weak drinks ; as water, flax-seed, mallows, baum, and mullen tea, or others as harmless ; and at most should not exceed small beer, except the patient be aged, has been accustomed to very high living, or his stomach is much troubled with dyspepsia, when a little good wine, beef tea, &c. may be allowed ; common whey has also been found by experience to be a very good drink in this disease.

Might fear be employed with advantage?—Yes, if judiciously exercised, I think it might; for many are the facts and observations tending to prove its debilitating effects. But, that it is beyond all controversy a debilitating power, we infer, from the incon-

incontestable marks of debility invariably induced by it; as loss of appetite, loathing of food, sickness at stomach, vomiting, diarrhoea, dyspepsia, colic, tremors, &c.

Concerning topical applications I have very little to advance, only requesting caution in their use. For though blistering, anointing with volatile and camphorated liniments, &c. have often assisted in removing the inflammation of the part, they have as often transferred it to some more important one. This, however, I can say, that anointing the part affected with molasses, and covering it with soft cabbage leaves, have frequently been practised with great advantage.

I have now made mention of all the means that I deem necessary in behalf of our first indication; but before passing to the second, I feel myself constrained to say a few words on the use of opium in this disease. For, like cold, its virtues are by no means agreed upon among physicians. By some it is esteemed one of the greatest and purest stimulants in nature: others say, that it contains within itself powers both sedative and stimulating; while others again tell us, that it is altogether a direct and certain sedative.

As every thing that has a tendency to irritate the system must be hurtful in inflammatory diseases, so the two first sects (if I may be allowed the expression) earnestly advise us to avoid the use of it in this class of diseases, as highly pernicious; while, on the contrary, those who advocate

the last opinion, recommend it to us as a valuable remedy.

In the pleurisy, and other sthenic diseases, I believe it is pretty generally employed in Germany; and I have heard a respectable physician in this city declare, that he and some other practitioners (whom he knew) employed it very freely in them. These facts, however, by no means prove its efficacy. We likewise know, that surgeons, when they are about to perform, and after they have performed any capital operation, as that for the stone, amputation, &c. always administer opium very liberally, to prevent inflammation; and that, in the same circumstances, they would not, on any account, give their patients wine, spirits, or any thing else which they deem stimulating. All this, however, to say no more, is to me no proof at all; for it is as possible for surgeons to be actuated by prejudice, and governed by system, as any other people; and, it is more than probable, they seldom or never gave wine, or other cordials a trial. But, for my own part, I consider this very practice, as an insuperable confirmation of the cordial effects of opium, and of the doctrine advanced in this dissertation. For it is well known, that before lithotomy or amputation is performed, the subjects of these operations are often in a weak state; and that after the operation, they frequently sink through mere debility, or the consequence of it—inflammation.

Now, in this state of debility, after the operation, they pour in their laudanum, which by invigorating
the

the system, prevents the inflammation that otherwise might have ensued, and thus restores the patient.

It cannot be expected that in this treatise I should enter into all the arguments on this subject; suffice it for the present to say, that the English Hippocrates, Sydenham, in his practice found it to be a most excellent cardiac; and that from the writings even of the immortal Cullen himself, many facts may be collected which prove it to be a stimulant. Dr Rush, and many other eminent physicians of this city, have repeatedly witnessed its invigorating power, to the great comfort of their patients, and their own satisfaction. But what confirms it to me more than all is, that I have myself repeatedly observed the same.

It may be asked here, how can the very successful practice of Dr Warner, who suffered inexpressibly from the gout, be reconciled to the doctrine of opium's being a stimulant? He, in the latter part of his life, made use of a watery solution of this substance internally; and so great was the benefit he derived from it, that he counted the hour in which he discovered its efficacy as one of the most fortunate he had ever known. The Doctor's gout, however, evidently appears to me to have been of the atonic kind: 1st. Because he was far advanced in life when he began to use it. 2d. Because he had been for many years troubled with the disorder. And 3d. Because he also recommends, as from experience on himself, wine, and salt meat, which every

body knows are highly stimulating. Upon the whole then, from what experience has yet taught us, I would advise my patients to use it very sparingly in this disease, unless there are evident marks of a mixed or defective action in the system.

I now come to the second indication, and here medicine can do little or nothing; our chief dependence is to be placed, 1st. On avoiding all the remote causes, especially in the spring and autumn, when the paroxysms generally occur. 2d. Temperance. 3d. Exercise.

As the paroxysms may recur, in consequence of either direct or indirect debility, so I would advise my patients to live on a diet, by which they may be preserved as much as possible from falling into either of these states. For this purpose, they must avoid animal food, nor should they live entirely on vegetables, but on a diet composed of a mixture of both. Such a combination is especially to be found in milk: and as vegetable matters, containing the greatest portion of nourishment, the farinaceous seeds may be joined with milk; as also potatoes, turnips, &c. The drink should consist chiefly of water.

The great Dr Cullen assures us, that by timely abstinence, and constant bodily exercise, the gout may often be prevented from ever appearing at all; and we know, from very good authority, that even after it has frequently recurred, it may be eradicated by a proper observance of these two grand agents.

Dr Cadogan highly extols exercise; Dr Chalmers bestows great encomiums on it; and Mr Small, from experience, especially on himself, ventures to declare, that nine in ten of gouty cripples owe their lameness more to indolence, and fear of a little pain from exercise, than to the genuine effects of the disease. He made it a constant rule to use active exercise, as soon as the inflammatory state was past; to which means he is firmly persuaded it is owing, that he always, except during the paroxysms, enjoyed the free use of his limbs, from the time the gout first made its appearance in him, which was in the year 1753, to the time of writing his essay in 1780.

It must appear evident to every person, that walking is the most proper exercise in this complaint: However, if the patient is not able to walk immediately after a paroxysm, let him begin with the passive or mixed kind, as failing, riding, frictions, &c. But let him be particularly careful never to fatigue himself; for instead of preventing, he would, by so doing, be in danger of hastening on a fit. It will, I believe, for the most part, be found necessary for our patients to live more or less after this manner, during the rest of their lives. For although we hear of some who have had no recurrence of this disorder, after continuing it only for a few years, yet in many the case is very different.

Of this Dr Rush, in his lectures, relates a remarkable case;—it was that of a gentleman not far advanced beyond the *acme* of life, who was in

easy

easy circumstances, lived high, and had for some years been afflicted with the gout : this gentleman was suddenly reduced, and cast into prison, while labouring under a paroxysm of it ; and here his diet was very low ; the consequence was, the symptoms immediately abated, and the fit was very short.

His affairs for several years after his imprisonment compelled him to live low, during all which time he had no return of his disorder : but fortune, that deceitful goddess, having once more smiled upon him, he relapsed into his former mode of good living, and was again visited by its faithful companion, the gout.

I do not presume to say, that this course will be proper in all constitutions ; on the contrary, I am persuaded, that to many who, in a paroxysm, would require bleeding, &c. it will be often proper, in the intervals, with exercise, to administer aromatics, tonics, &c. so that every physician must be guided by the symptoms present, and not by the name of the disease.

I shall conclude this essay with saying a few words on

The Cure of the Atonic Species.

AND this also very naturally divides itself into two indications ; first, to relieve our patient in the fit. This indication is answered by a proper application of stimuli, especially the diffusible, as *opium*, *vola-*

volatile salts, gum guaiac. æther, musk, wine, &c. internally, and sinapisms, blisters, or other stimulating substances externally, to the feet, &c. The gum guaiac. has lately attracted the attention of all Europe, as a remedy in the gout. Its good effects in the chronic rheumatism, have been well ascertained for a considerable number of years; but I believe it was first recommended to the public as a cure for the gout, by Mr Emergion of St Pierre, Martinique: to give a minute detail of his practice and observations, would take up too much time; I therefore would refer to his letter on the subject, which may be seen in Dr Dawson's book of cases in the acute rheumatism and gout. His method was to digest two ounces of the gum with three pints of taffia for seven or eight days; then to filter the liquor through cotton or paper, and take a table spoonful for a dose, every morning fasting: after the publication of his letter many people made use the guaiacum.

To some it proved beneficial; others it manifestly injured very much. In those instances in which it proved injurious, I am inclined to attribute its failure to an improper and excessive administration of it; or else to its indiscriminate use in every state and case of the gout. Now, such a practice, at least if our doctrine be true, it is evident, cannot but be attended with bad effects: I am for my own part persuaded, that it will rarely be found useful, except in the atonic species of the disease, or in the intervals, when other stimuli are indicated.

That

That the guaiacum is improper in the inflammatory state, I do not rest, on bare assertion. That accurate observer, and excellent physician, Dr Cullen, has known it repeatedly to prove very hurtful in it. I must, however add, that our professor of the Materia Medica, and many other practitioners, do not hesitate to employ the mixture of guaiacum, in these cases, as it proves a certain cathartic.

If the stomach is affected with vomiting in this disease, columbo root or other bitters are very good. Porter has sometimes put a stop to it. A plaster of venice-treacle to the stomach is also a proper application.

Sydenham appears to have been conversant chiefly with this species ; and it is certainly in this that he recommends his heating and bitter stomachics ; as horse-radish, angelica, wormwood, eliccampane, venice-treacle, Peruvian bark, &c. It must also be in this, that Dr Cheyne so highly extols the bark, and chalybeates ; and that Warner recommends wine, salt meat, &c. Here also, if at all, will Dr Brown's rum, whisky, and brandy be found useful.

For the second indication, exercise will be found indispensably necessary—and indeed we cannot too warmly recommend it. Sydenham places great confidence in it, especially riding on horseback ; for this admirably, and according to him, more than any other exercise, invigorates the digestive organs.

If the patient cannot ride, let him make free use of frictions ; and when able, he must also often exercise his lower extremities by walking, &c.

Let him by all means remember, that all this must be moderate ; for if excessive, it will be worse to him than indolence itself. 2d. Solid and stimulating food is very useful, as wild fowl, salt meat, beef, &c. The meals must be sparing, but may be often repeated; his drink may be porter, sherry, Madeira, port, &c. but the stomach sometimes rejects all these; when Dr Cullen tells us, ardent spirits and water must be allowed. To support the tone of the stomach, aromatics and bitters may now and then be given—Peruvian bark is very good; but I believe iron will be found more effectual for this purpose than any other medicine.

I shall say nothing of the numerous nostrums, that have been from time to time employed in this disease; I shall even pass by the Duke of Portland's famous powder, and just mention that there are several cases related in the Edinburgh Physical Essays, Vol. III. in which hemlock, an infusion of tansey, and lime water, were separately administered with seeming advantage.

If there is sufficient power in the system, to produce a glow on the surface after it, the cold bath may likewise be employed with advantage.

It is highly necessary for persons subject to the gout, especially to the atonic species of it, to avoid wet feet and cold; which may be done, by wearing cork

cork foals to their shoes, and repairing to a warm climate during the winter season.

In the beginning of this treatise I have said, that the gout counterfeits almost every disease to which the human body is liable; and have now to add, that in every appearance it is to be treated as symptoms indicate.

I had nearly forgot to mention one article of the highest importance in this disease, I mean peace of mind; for as vexation has often a great deal to do in its production, so Sydenham, Cadogan, and many other eminent men, set down its opposite as one of their principal agents, in an attempt towards a cure.

It might now perhaps be asked, why has so little been said on misplaced and retrocedent gout? To answer this question, I would refer to the seventh page of this thesis; in which place I have said, that the gout, wheresoever it appears, will be either inflammatory or atonic, except in a few cases, in which a mixed action takes place. I have likewise said very little on the use of blisters; and indeed, conceived it unnecessary to say more than I did.

I will however just add, that when the gouty diathesis is in the habit, but the disease, instead of fixing on the extremities, flies about from one part of the system, to another, and perhaps lights on some internal part of great importance, the application of blisters, and of other stimulating substances to the lower extremities, may be advised to invite the gout thither.

In the former part of this thesis I have said, that a paroxysm of either species of the gout, when in the forming state, may be often obviated by a proper application of stimuli; as wine, laudanum, &c. I likewise think, that electricity may be very advantageously employed for the same purpose. Indeed some venture to make use of it as a remedy in inflammatory action; and Cavallo, in his Essay on Medical Electricity, tells us, that the gout has been certainly cured by it in various instances, and that inflammations of every sort are generally relieved by it. As it is however known to be a very powerful stimulus, I would use it with great caution where there was excess of action.

In the fifteenth volume of the Medical Commentaries of Edinburgh, we have the case of a Mr Brifaud, who at different times had for several years been afflicted with gouty pains in his feet. On a certain day, while labouring under these symptoms, he went out to hunt, and had occasion to pass through a small marsh, in which there was about a foot, or a foot and an half of water; in this he was struck by a torporific eel, which produced a very violent commotion in both his knees: he, however, pursued his route; the pain soon subsided, and when the account from which this sketch is extracted was penned, which was eight months after he had been struck by the fish, he had not yet felt any return of it.

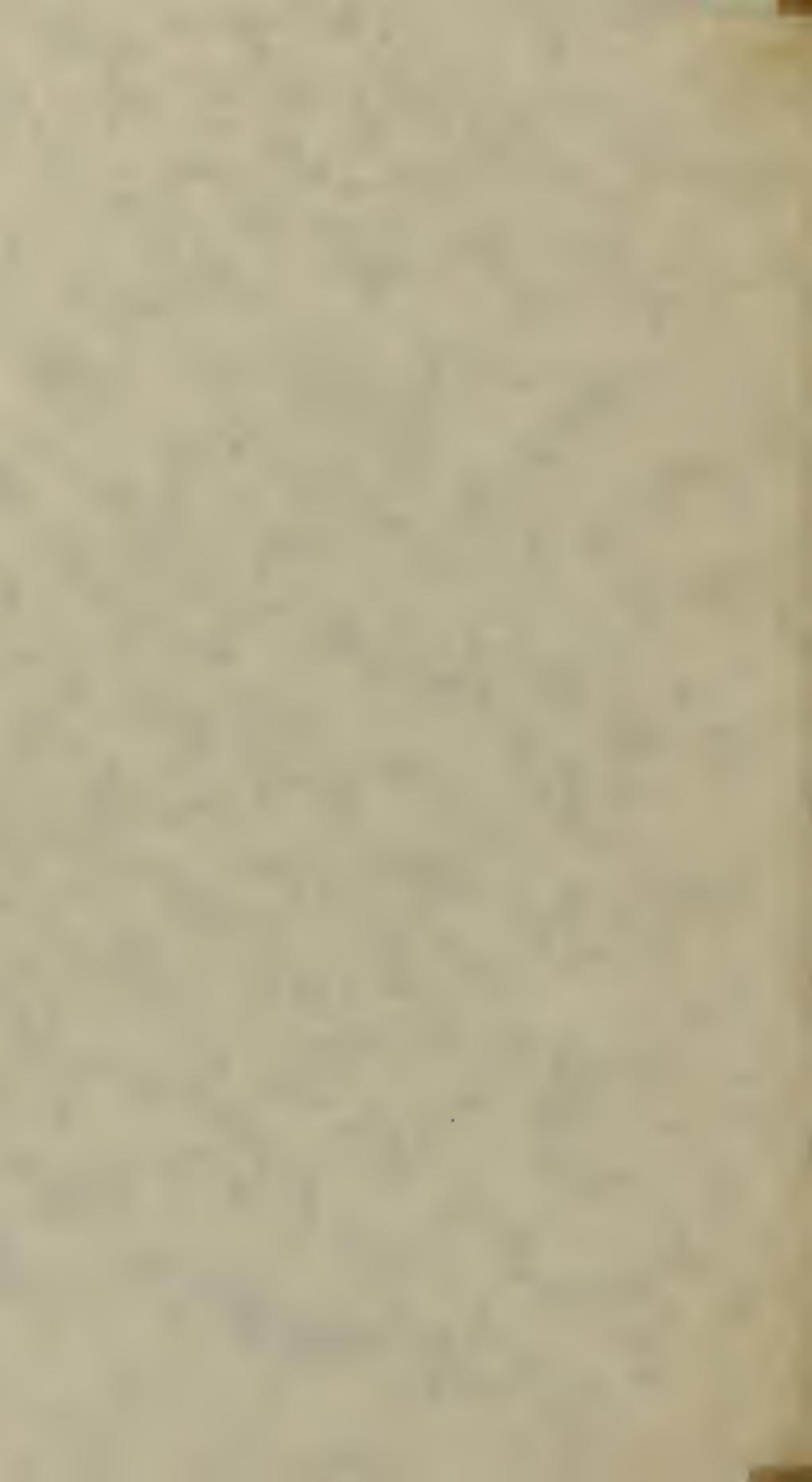
It would therefore appear, that electricity, if prudently employed, may prove useful, not only

a palliative remedy in alleviating gouty pains, but
in preventing a recurrence of the paroxysms.

Burning the affected part with moxa, when it
can be done conveniently, has been often practised,
especially in the East-Indies. And Herman Buss-
chot, a Dutch physician of the last century, who
resided at Batavia, in the East-Indies, speaks of it as
a certain and infallible remedy. Succeeding physi-
cians, however, have not been so successful in its
application, and Dr Cullen thinks very lightly of
it. Those who wish for particular information on
this subject, may consult Busschot's Treatise on the
Gout.

Having concluded this dissertation, I have only
to bid a respectful and affectionate adieu to this
rising seminary :—That she may long continue to
send forth her sons, eminent for learning and vir-
tue—that her medical professors may long be an
ornament to her, and shine forth the brightest lu-
minaries of science—and that they may ever conti-
nue to be the patrons and promoters of medical
knowledge, is my sincerest wish.

T H E E N D.



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